

President Biden also deserves credit—credit that is due him for successfully bringing democracies together against Putin with crushing sanctions and an outpouring of security assistance. Today, President Putin is more isolated than ever before while democracies have rallied together, and this is much to the credit of President Biden. He has done an amazing job.

Here in the United States, we stand unflinchingly with the people of Ukraine. Twenty-one years ago, in the aftermath of 9/11, Americans rallied together after our democracy was attacked here at home. Today, as democracy is under assault, we must come together in solidarity with the Ukrainian people. We should all be together supporting this country's efforts.

When I said the President did an amazing job, here is one thing I was referring to: No one thought that the Europeans would go along with removing parts of the SWIFT system from the Russian financial system; no one thought that we would sanction the Russian Central Bank—two of the most powerful weapons we have, but the Europeans were going to be reluctant. Because President Biden was strong, was patient, was persistent, and didn't let himself get pushed around by would-be critics, that is now happening. Over the next several months—even now, today, but even more so as time goes on—those are going to have severe effects on President Putin.

So he deserves a lot of credit, and I just hope we will all, all of us, come together, just as we did after 9/11 when freedom was under assault in our own country, and rally, united in supporting the President and what he is doing.

WOMEN'S HEALTHCARE PROTECTION ACT

Mr. SCHUMER. On the Women's Healthcare Protection Act, later today, the Senate is going to vote on a simple yet urgent question: Will this Chamber agree to begin debate on protecting a woman's right to make her own healthcare choices?

Across the country, it is a dark, dark time for women's reproductive rights. Last year, we saw the most—the most—abortion restrictions passed by State legislatures in a single year. Some of them were almost vicious—the vigilantism of Texas's law. I call it vicious vigilantism. Many of these new laws are downright extreme, effectively extinguishing women's ability to even exercise their rights at all. The new, extreme restrictions fly largely in the face of public opinion. They also fly in the face of commonsense health practices. Frankly, they fly against common decency itself, and sadly it seems like the Supreme Court is close to drastically restricting this long-established right in the coming months.

So the Senate today is going to take action because abortion has never been more at risk in America. Indeed, this

will be the first time the Senate takes a vote on a stand-alone bill to proactively codify Roe. Let me say that again. This will be the first time that the Senate takes a vote on a stand-alone bill to proactively codify Roe. Every American—every American—deserves to know where his or her Senator stands on an issue as important as the right to choose, and today's vote will do that.

From the moment that Roe was decided in 1973, the most extreme elements of the Republican Party have plotted its demise. The Federalist Society was founded with the intent of cultivating a generation of judges loyal to conservative causes.

Sadly, it seems like the Supreme Court is posed to severely limit abortion rights in the coming months. That is why this bill is essential.

Congress must codify into law what most Americans have long believed—that abortion is a fundamental right and that women's decisions over women's healthcare belong to women, not—to extremist rightwing legislatures.

We must vote in favor to hold a debate on this bill. I will proudly, strongly vote yes. I urge my colleagues to do the same.

POSTAL SERVICE REFORM ACT

Mr. SCHUMER. Finally, on postal, this week, the Senate is also going to keep working to pass long-overdue postal reform to strengthen mail deliveries, take care of our postal workers, and put the post office on a path to long-term stability.

I want to be clear that this bill has enough bipartisan support to ultimately become law. It is the product of weeks and months of good-faith negotiation by my colleagues, especially my friend Senator PETERS. We could have passed postal reform at the end of the last work period were it not for the capricious obstruction from the Senator from Florida. Nevertheless, postal reform remains on the right track, and I expect we will be able to send it to the President's desk very soon.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. DUCKWORTH). The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

RECOGNITION OF THE MINORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Republican leader is recognized.

UKRAINE

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, last week, Putin again invaded the sov-

ereign territory of a neighboring country. Sadly, it was long clear that attempts to invoke genteel international norms would not move this self-styled czar.

Putin only cares about norms insofar as he wants to rewrite them. He only cares about the peaceful international order insofar as he wants to disrupt it.

Like his Soviet predecessors, Putin has always rejected the postwar order that held up states' sovereignty and territorial integrity as sacrosanct. Putin and Xi of China both want to replace this peaceful order with spheres of influence.

They want to bend other countries to their will and redraw borders by force. Make no mistake, this crisis does not and will not end with Ukraine. And the reason isn't simply that appetites grow with eating. Confrontation with the West is Putin's main objective.

He wants to restore the Russian empire. He said explicitly, he wants NATO rolled back to its 1997 borders. We have a dictator trying to dismember a U.S. partner, trying to decapitate its democratically elected government.

Does anybody really think it stops here? Does anybody think that Europe, or for that matter, Taiwan, will be safe if the world lets this stand?

We will only deter further Russian and Chinese aggression if Putin is made to pay a significant price. Massive and sustained sanctions that undermine his ability to wage war, now and into the future, will be necessary.

But sanctions alone will not suffice. Russia has massive currency reserves. It has options to blunt economic pain and to impose counterattacks on America and our partners, at least in the near term. The sanctions that would hurt Moscow the most would also have a significant impact on our friends in Europe. So there will continue to be resistance to maximalist sanctions.

To date, the Biden administration has sent mixed messages about its own sanctions policy. For months, we heard that prospective sanctions were being drafted to deter Putin's aggression. But last week, the President said he and his advisers never thought sanctions would deter Russia. Now, they are finally imposing sanctions but short of everything that is available.

So to what end exactly? What is the administration's coherent plan? I believe we should have used more of these tools prior to this brutal escalation to deter Putin and to weaken his capacity to wage war. Now, we must use these tools aggressively to impose massive costs for Putin's aggression, to demonstrate to other aggressors that we mean business, and to degrade Putin's longer-term ability to threaten NATO and compete with the West.

But ultimately, sanctions are no substitute for military power. They are no substitute for the steps we must take